NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5714 APRIL 12, 1978
DAVID LENT/SALISBURY

RHODESIA'S BLACK JUSTICE MINISTER
(VOICED PIECE, WITH INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR:

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE BRITAIN BECAME THE COLONIAL RULER OF RHODESIA NINETY YEARS AGO, THAT COUNTRY HAS A BLACK MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ORDER. VOA'S DAVID LENT SOUGHT OUT THIRTY-SEVEN YEAR OLD BYRON HOVE AND FILED THIS REPORT.

VOICE:

BYRON HOVE IS A LAWYER BY TRAINING AND A MAN OF JUSTICE BY INCLINATION. HE HAS JUST RETURNED FROM A PROFITABLE LAW PRACTICE IN LONDON TO SHARE WITH A WHITE MINISTER RESPONSIBILITY FOR JUSTICE, LAW, AND ORDER FOR THE DURATION OF RHODESIA'S TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT. HIS PRIMARY TASK, HE SAYS, IS TO CREATE CONFIDENCE AMONG RHODESIA'S BLACK MAJORITY IN THE COUNTRY'S POLICE, ITS LAWS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. ONE MEASURE WILL BE TO CHANGE THE ATTITUDE OF THE POLICE WHO UP TO THE PRESENT, HE SAYS, HAVE NOT EARNED A GOOD NAME WITH THE BLACK POPULATION OF RHODESIA.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- HOVE

"IT IS MY DUTY TO SEE THAT THEIR IMAGE IS IMPROVED AND TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE NOT THERE TO REALLY WORK AS SIMPLY MEMBERS OF A POLITICAL PARTY, OR AGENTS OF THE RHODESIA FRONT, WHICH HAS BEEN RULING, OR ANY POLITICAL PARTY, FOR THAT MATTER, BUT THAT THEY ARE SIMPLY THERE AS OFFICERS OF ORDER, LAW AND ORDER, IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THOSE TERMS. AND THIS REALLY MEANS THAT I HAVE TO MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND THAT MAJORITY RULE IS COMING AND THEY MUST PREPARE FOR THAT MAJORITY RULE."

THE NEW MINISTER SEES REPEAL OR MODIFICATION OF DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION AS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT TASK. ONE LAW EXPECTED TO BE ELIMINATED IS BE THE LAND TENURE ACT, WHICH ENFORCES RESIDENTIAL DISCRIMINATION. ANOTHER TARGET OF MINISTER HOVE IS THE LAW AND ORDER MAINTENANCE ACT WHICH EMPOWERS THE GOVERNMENT TO DETAIN ITS OPPONENTS WITHOUT TRIAL.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- HOVE

"THIS IS THE MOST NOTORIOUS LEGISLATION WHICH IS BEING USED NOW. I WANT TO SEE IT VASTLY MODIFIED, I CAN'T SEE IT BEING REPEALED TOTALLY, BUT VASTLY MODIFIED, SO THAT WE GET CONDITIONS WHICH ARE CONDUCIVE TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES BECAUSE WE ARE NOW ENTERING THAT ERA OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES."

(SEGUES TO LENT-HOVE Q. AND A.)

LENT: "MISTER HOVE, SHOULD RHODESIA DURING THIS TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, CONTINUE TO HAVE A LAW ENABLING YOU TO DETAIN PERSONS WITHOUT TRIAL?"

HOVE: "I DON'T THINK SO. THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I HAVE MENTIONED THE LAW AND ORDER MAINTENACE ACT. BUT, OF COURSE, IN ANY GIVEN STATE, AND HERE I HAVE TO LOOK AT MATTERS WITH REALISM, A STATE WHEN IT FACES THREATS OF EXTINCTION, FOR THAT MATTER, IS ENTITLED TO TAKE SUCH MEASURES AS WOULD PROTECT ITS OWN SURVIVAL ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE."

VOICE:

MISTER HOVE PLEDGED THAT AS THE LAW OFFICER OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT HE WILL NEVER ALLOW PARTISAN CONSIDERATIONS TO DECIDE WHO SHALL BE DETAINED OR RELEASED FROM DETENTION. JOSHIA CHINAMANO, WHO HEADS THE POLITICAL ARM OF JOSHUA NKOMO'S GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION, SAID HERE IN SALISBURY THAT HE DOUBTS ANY DETAINEES NOT CLEARLY PLEDGING SUPPORT TO BISHOP MUZOREWA OR THE REVEREND SITHOLE WILL BE RELEASED BY THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT CLEARLY DEPENDS UPON DECISONS AND DEVELOPMENTS BOTH HERE IN SALISBURY AND ABROAD. BUT UNLESS BYRON HOVE CAN ALTER FUNDAMENTALLY IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS THIS COUNTRY'S LAWS AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE POLICE WHO ENFORCE THEM, FAIR ELECTIONS WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE, AND WITHOUT ELECTIONS SEEN TO BE FAIR ANY CLAIM BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TO A LEGITIMATE MANDATE COULD BE HOLLOW INDEED.

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WJL/RTD